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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3895
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2533
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2655
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1148
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1924
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2279
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2704
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5132
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFIS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1811
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000019

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM ZI
SUBJECT: MUGABE SHUFFLES MINISTERS AS HE AWAITS MDC DECISION

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i., Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4
(d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) In early January, President Robert Mugabe dismissed 12 ministers and deputy ministers, and shifted their portfolios to other senior ZANU-PF officials. The dismissals were in keeping with constitutional requirements that stipulate that all ministers and deputies need to be sitting members of Parliament. The decision not to fill these seats with new ZANU-PF parliamentarians likely reflects Mugabe's continued desire to bring the MDC into government. END
SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) During the first week of January, President Mugabe issued letters of dismissal to nine ministers and three deputy ministers who lost their seats in Parliament in the March 2008 elections. The dismissals came as a result of a standing constitutional requirement that stipulates that ministerial appointments be filled from sitting members of one of the two chambers of Parliament, the House of Assembly and the Senate. The dismissals consisted of Chen Chimutengwende, minister of Public and Interactive Affairs; Rugare Gumbo, minister of Agriculture; Amos Midzi, minister of Mines and Mining Development; Oppah Muchinguri, minister of Gender, Women's Affairs and Community Development; Samuel Mumbengegwi, minister of Finance; Munacho Mutezo, minister of Water Resources and Development; Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, minister of Information and Publicity; and Michael Nyambuya, minister of Energy and Power Development. The dismissed deputy ministers consisted of David Chapfika, deputy minister of Agriculture; Edwin Muguti, deputy minister of Health and Child Welfare; and Kenneth Mutiwekuziva, deputy minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

¶3. (U) On January 6, Mugabe appointed eight interim ministers to temporarily serve as acting heads. These

appointments consisted of Aeneas Chigwedere, who previously served as minister of Education, Sport and Culture and is continuing on as the acting minister; Patrick Chinamasa, currently minister of Justice and now also the acting minister of Finance; Joseph Made, currently minister of Agriculture Mechanization and now also the acting minister of Water Resources and Infrastructural Development; Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana, currently minister of Indigenization and Empowerment and now also the acting minister of Information and Publicity; Christopher Mushohwe, previously the minister of Transport and Communications and continuing on as the acting minister; Sylvester Nguni, currently minister of Economic Development and now also the acting minister of Agriculture; Sithembiso Nyoni, currently minister of Small to Medium Enterprises Development and now also the acting minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development; and Sydney Sekeremayi, currently minister of Defense and now also the acting minister of Mines and Mining Development.

¶4. (U) Chigwedere, Chinamasa, Made, and Mushohwe all lost their parliamentary seats, but are eligible for ministerial posts by virtue of having been appointed non-constituency senators.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) The dismissals do not reflect divisions or problems

HARARE 00000019 002 OF 002

within ZANU-PF. Six of the eight appointed acting ministers are assuming the duties of a second ministry. We interpret this to mean that by choosing not to fill those seats with other ZANU-PF MPs, Mugabe is leaving himself flexibility to negotiate with the MDC and managing the risk of having to dismiss ZANU-PF ministers to accommodate future MDC appointments. He could also fill these positions at a later time with other ZANU-PF parliamentarians should he move forward with recent threats to form a government without the MDC in February. END COMMENT.

DHANANI